



# Early August Forecast for Northwest Pacific Typhoon Activity in 2023

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**TSR continues to predict that Northwest Pacific typhoon activity in 2023 will be around 30% above the 1991-2020 30-year norm.**

**Summary:** The TSR (Tropical Storm Risk) early August forecast for Northwest Pacific typhoon activity in 2023 continues to anticipate a season with above-norm activity. TSR uses the strong link ( $R^2 = 0.82$ ; 1993-2022) between the annual Northwest Pacific ACE index and August-September-October (ASO) ENSO combined with the expectation that the developing moderate El Niño will persist through ASO 2023. Although some uncertainties remain and the forecast skill at this range is historically moderate to good, TSR anticipates there is a 90% likelihood that Northwest Pacific ACE in 2023 will be above the 1991-2020 30-year norm and anticipates there is a 79% chance Northwest Pacific ACE in 2023 will be in the upper tercile of years 1991-2020.

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## 1. TSR August 2023 Northwest Pacific Seasonal Typhoon Activity Forecast

### 1.1 Forecast Northwest Pacific ACE Index and System Numbers in 2023:

		ACE Index	Intense Typhoons	Typhoons	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast	2023	393	14	20	29
72-yr Climate Norm	1965-2022	290	8.7	16.1	25.7
30-yr Climate Norm	1991-2020	301	9.3	16.0	25.5
10-yr Climate Norm	2013-2022	257	8.5	14.0	24.8
Forecast Skill at this Lead	2013-2022	85%	53%	26%	14%

- Key: ACE Index = Accumulated Cyclone Energy Index = Sum of the squares of 6-hourly maximum sustained wind speeds (in units of knots) for all systems while they are at least tropical storm strength. ACE unit =  $\times 10^4$  knots<sup>2</sup>.
- Intense Typhoon = 1 minute sustained wind > 95 kts = Hurricane category 3 to 5.
  - Typhoon = 1 minute sustained wind > 63 kts = Hurricane category 1 to 5.
  - Tropical Storm = 1 minute sustained wind > 33 kts.
  - Forecast Skill = Percentage improvement in mean square error over running 10-year prior climate norm for the TSR publicly-released seasonal outlooks for the 10-years 2013-2022.
  - Northwest Pacific = Northern hemisphere region west of 180°W including the South China Sea. Any tropical cyclone (irrespective of where it forms) which reaches tropical storm strength within this region counts as an event.

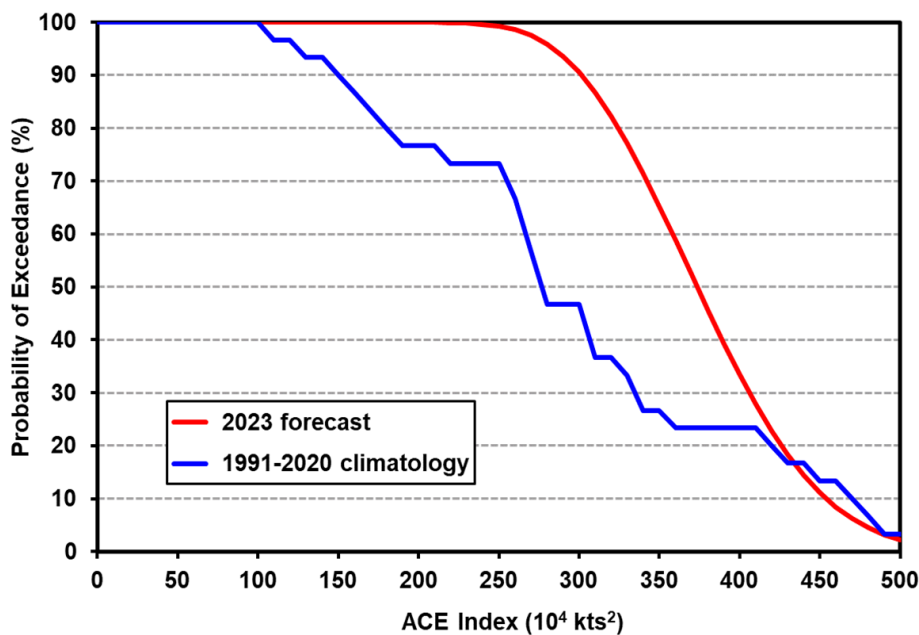
The forecast tercile probabilities (1991-2020 data) for the 2023 Northwest Pacific typhoon season ACE index are as follows: a 79% probability of being upper tercile, a 20% likelihood of being middle tercile and only a 1% chance of being lower tercile.

Key: Terciles = Data groupings of equal (33.3%) probability corresponding to the upper, middle and lower one-third of values for the current 30-year climate norm (1991-2020). Upper tercile = ACE value greater than 328. Middle tercile = ACE value between 259 and 328. Lower tercile = ACE value less than 259.

## 1.2 Forecast Probability of Exceedance Plot for the Northwest Pacific ACE index in 2023:

Seasonal outlooks for Northwest Pacific typhoon activity contribute to the anticipation of risk for insurance companies, other weather-sensitive businesses, and local and national governments. However, the uncertainty associated with such forecasts is often unclear. This reduces their benefit and contributes to the perception of forecast ‘busts’. The robust assessment of risk requires a full and clear probabilistic quantification of forecast uncertainty with the forecast issued in terms of probability of exceedance (PoE). In this way the chance of each typhoon number/activity outcome occurring is clear for the benefit of users.

Figure 1 displays our current forecast for the 2023 Northwest Pacific ACE index in terms of PoE. The forecast PoE curve is computed using the robust method described in section 3 of Saunders et al. (2020) while the climatology PoE curve is computed directly from observations. The figure specifies the current chance that a given ACE index will be reached in 2023 and how this chance compares to climatology.



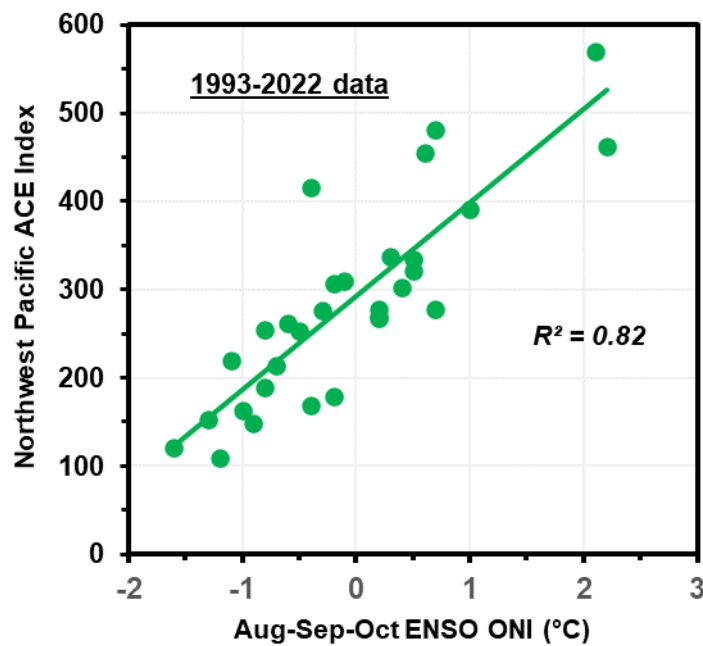
**Figure 1.** Forecast probability of exceedance (PoE) plot for the Northwest Pacific ACE index in 2023. The plot displays two sets of PoE data comprising the TSR forecast PoE curve issued in early August and the 1991-2020 climatology PoE curve.

## 2. TSR Forecast Methodology

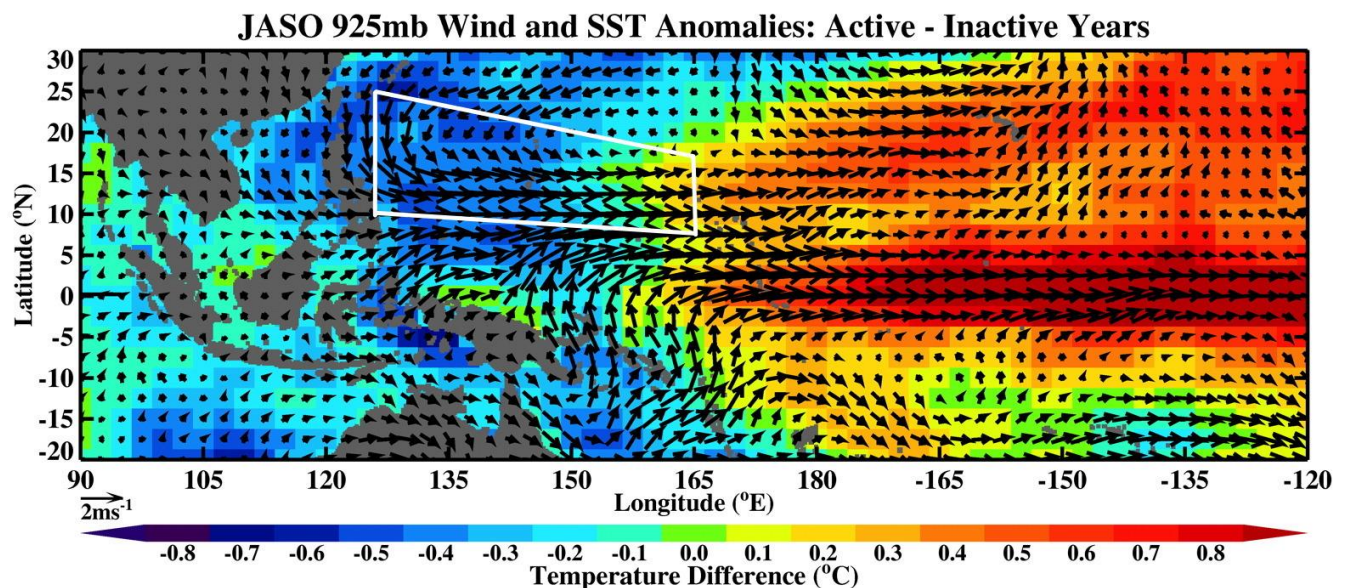
### 2.1 Primary Models:

The TSR forecast model is statistical in nature and employs predictors that have sound physical links to contemporaneous tropical cyclone activity. The TSR primary models are underpinned by the expected state of El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in August-September-October (ASO). Figure 2 shows the

strong linear link that exists between the magnitude of the annual Northwest Pacific ACE index and the sign and magnitude of the ASO ENSO (see also, for example, Saunders et al. (2000) and Maue (2011)). ENSO is represented in Figure 2 by the Oceanic Niño Index (ONI) defined as the 3-month average surface temperature anomaly for the Niño 3.4 region. When the ASO ENSO ONI value is  $\leq -1$  the ACE index is 200 or less. In contrast, when the ASO ENSO ONI is  $\geq 1$  the ACE index is 400 or more.



**Figure 2.** Nature of the TSR primary model for forecasting Northwest Pacific seasonal typhoon activity. The figure shows the strong linear link ( $R^2 = 0.82$ ; 1993-2022) between the annual Northwest Pacific ACE index and the sign and magnitude of ENSO in August-September-October.



**Figure 3.** Nature of the physical mechanism behind the TSR primary model in Figure 2. The composite difference figure shows the dominant July-August-September-October (JASO) environmental fields associated with active Northwest Pacific intense typhoon years. Active typhoon seasons occur due to the effects of the anomalous Walker circulation and the resulting weakened easterly trade winds that occur over the tropical Northwest Pacific due to El Niño (warm ENSO) conditions. Inactive typhoon seasons occur due to the effects of the anomalous Walker circulation and the resulting strengthened easterly trade

winds that occur over the tropical Northwest Pacific due to La Niña (cold ENSO) conditions. The white quadrilateral denotes where Northwest Pacific tropical cyclones become intense typhoons.

The physical mechanism behind the strong ASO ENSO link to Northwest Pacific seasonal ACE and seasonal intense typhoon numbers is described in Lea and Saunders (2006) and is illustrated in Figure 3. When ASO ENSO is El Niño (ONI value  $> 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) the anomalous Walker circulation leads to anomalously weak trade winds in the Northwest Pacific between  $2.5^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $12.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ . These in turn increase the cyclonic vorticity and decrease the vertical wind shear where intense typhoons form and track, leading to greater intense typhoon numbers and to an enhanced seasonal ACE index. In contrast when ASO ENSO is La Niña (ONI value  $< -0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) the anomalous Walker circulation leads to anomalously strong trade winds in the Northwest Pacific between  $2.5^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $12.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ . These in turn weaken the cyclonic vorticity and increase the vertical wind shear where intense typhoons form and track, leading to fewer intense typhoon numbers and to a reduced seasonal ACE index.

The predictor(s) used for each TSR seasonal forecast primary model are as follows:

Early May: ACE is forecast from our expectation for the value for ASO ENSO ONI and the regression in Figure 2. Intense typhoon numbers are forecast by using their observed regression with ACE for 1998-2022. Typhoon numbers are forecast by using their observed regression with intense typhoon numbers for 1998-2022. Tropical storm numbers are forecast by using their observed regression with typhoon numbers for 1991-2022.

Early July: ACE is forecast from our expectation for the value for ASO ENSO ONI, using the June 925 hPa trade wind speed for the region  $2.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ - $12.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ ,  $120^{\circ}\text{E}$ - $180^{\circ}\text{E}$  and by using the observed ACE activity up to the date of the forecast issue. Storm numbers are forecast by applying the methods used in the early May forecast.

Early August: ACE and intense typhoon numbers are forecast from our expectation for the value for ASO ENSO ONI, using the June-July 925 hPa trade wind speed for the region  $2.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ - $12.5^{\circ}\text{N}$ ,  $120^{\circ}\text{E}$ - $180^{\circ}\text{E}$  and by using the observed ACE activity up to the date of the forecast issue. Typhoon numbers and tropical storm numbers are forecast by using their observed regression with intense typhoon numbers.

The ASO ENSO is predicted by using the statistical consolidated CLIPER model (Lloyd-Hughes, Saunders and Rockett, 2004) and by the methods described in §2.2. All regressions are performed using normalized data for all variables to ensure that the requirements of linear regression modelling are met. Normality is assessed using the Anderson-Darling statistical test.

## **2.2 Procedures, Checks and Adjustments to Finalise Forecast:**

Each TSR seasonal typhoon forecast is initiated by running the TSR primary seasonal forecast model with NCEP/NCAR reanalysis data updated to within a few days of the seasonal forecast issue date. These outputs are then assessed in combination with other sources of information before the final values for the seasonal forecast are decided. The other sources of information often lead either to the TSR forecast model being rerun with different values for its predictor(s) or to the outputs of the forecast models being manually adjusted.

The sources of other information that are referred to when finalising the TSR Northwest Pacific seasonal typhoon activity forecasts include the following:

- ENSO consensus forecasts compiled and provided by IRI (International Research Institute for Climate and Society).
- NCEP CFSv2 seasonal forecast data (updated daily).
- ECMWF seasonal forecast data (updated monthly).
- NOAA 'ENSO: recent evolution, current status and predictions' weekly report.
- UCL unpublished 'statistical composite prediction of ENSO outcomes' data.

- Tropical Tidbits data and forecast data (updated daily).

The following procedures and adjustments to the outputs from the TSR primary forecast models are made in order to enhance forecast precision:

- a) The additional information sources are used to give a consensus value for TSR's main primary predictor – the ASO ENSO ONI. In determining this consensus value more weight is given to the seasonal ENSO forecasts from the *NCEP CFSv2* and *ECMWF* models and from the *UCL "Statistical composite prediction of ENSO outcomes"*.
- b) If the consensus value obtained from (a) differs by more than 0.1°C from the value output by the statistical consolidated CLIPER model (Lloyd-Hughes, Saunders and Rockett, 2004) the consensus value is used as the TSR primary model forecast value for ASO ENSO ONI.
- c) If forecasts anticipate the intensification of either a La Niña or an El Niño event during the second half of the typhoon season (namely during the period from mid September to the end of November) the TSR seasonal typhoon forecasts (especially the early May and early July forecasts) are adjusted slightly to reflect this ENSO intensification.

### **3. Factors Influencing the August 2023 TSR Forecast**

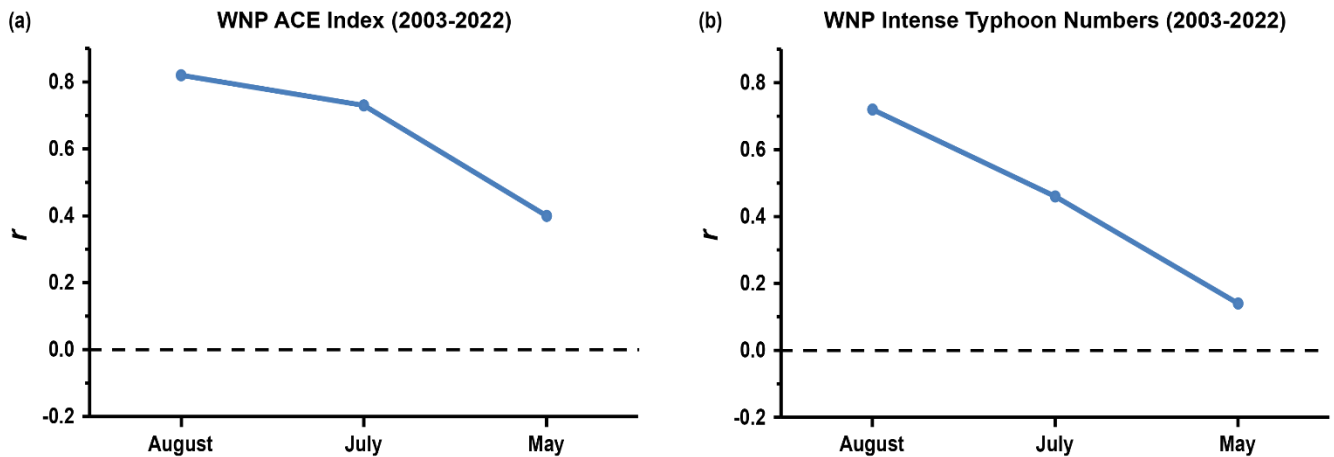
The TSR early August forecast for Northwest Pacific typhoon activity in 2023 calls for ACE-activity 30% above the 1991-2020 30-year climate norm because TSR's primary predictor at this range – the forecast sign and magnitude of ENSO in August-September-October (ASO) 2023 - anticipates the continued development of a moderate El Niño which will persist through ASO 2023. When El Niño is present during ASO the anomalous Walker circulation that occurs in tandem with El Niño leads to weakened easterly trade winds over the Northwest Pacific region where tropical cyclones form and track. These weakened easterly trades in turn strengthen the local cyclonic vorticity and decrease the local vertical wind shear, thereby giving environmental conditions that lead to a greater number of intense typhoons and to an enhanced seasonal ACE index.

Our expectation for El Niño conditions through ASO 2023 has very high confidence. The ENSO consensus forecast provided by IRI has forecast El Niño conditions during ASO 2023 for several months, and El Niño conditions have now developed and are expected to peak later this year. The consensus forecast value for ASO ENSO ONI that we employ is 1.4°C.

Another factor behind the TSR forecast for above-norm typhoon activity is the observed activity to date in 2023. The NW Pacific ACE index up to the 5<sup>th</sup> August is 121 which is the eleventh highest year-to-date ACE for the period 1965-2023. Of the three other years during this period which had a year-to-date ACE index between 111 and 131, all were active typhoon seasons with an average ACE index of 370.

Historically the skill from early August forecasts for Northwest Pacific typhoon activity is moderate to good (§1.1 and Figure 4). This is due to the typical uncertainty in the ASO ENSO ONI value at this two-month lead and because even if the ASO ONI value is anticipated correctly a spread in ACE levels can still ensue (Figure 2). However, because the current likelihood for ASO 2023 ENSO being El Niño is very high and there has been high activity to date, we believe that the uncertainty in our early August 2023 forecast is less than is typical at this range.

## **4. Precision of TSR Seasonal Typhoon Forecasts 2003-2022 Issued Publicly**



**Figure 4.** Real-time skill of the TSR seasonal outlooks for northwest Pacific (a) ACE and (b) intense typhoon numbers assessed for the 19-year period 2003-2022. Skill is shown as the Pearson correlation,  $r$ , between the forecast values (issued separately in early May, early July and early August) and the observed values.

The skill of the TSR seasonal forecasts for Northwest Pacific typhoon activity issued publicly in real-time for the 16-year period 2003-2018 were assessed by Klotzbach et al (2019) (see their Figure 4). Figure 4 extends the Klotzbach et al. skill assessment to span the period between 2003 and 2022. Skill is displayed as a function of forecast lead-time for two measures of seasonal typhoon activity – the basin ACE index and basin intense typhoon numbers. Figure 4 shows that the TSR seasonal forecast skill from early August is good. The correlation skill for typhoon numbers (not shown) is lower, reaching 0.39 by early August.

## **5. Forecast Archive, Next Forecast, Acknowledgements and References**

### **5.1 Forecast Archive and Date of Next Forecast:**

The archive of all the TSR publicly released Northwest Pacific seasonal typhoon forecasts (from 2000 to 2023) may be viewed at [https://tropicalstormrisk.com/for\\_typh.html](https://tropicalstormrisk.com/for_typh.html). This is the final TSR forecast update for the 2023 Northwest Pacific typhoon season.

### **5.2 Acknowledgements:**

The TSR (Tropical Storm Risk) Northwest Pacific seasonal typhoon forecasts were instigated in 2000 by Professor Mark Saunders at UCL with funding from the UK insurance industry. Saunders led these predictions until his retirement in April 2022. Notable contributions to the development and operation of the TSR seasonal typhoon forecasts were also made by Dr Paul Rockett, Frank Roberts and Dr Adam Lea (all former UCL research assistants of Saunders).



### 5.3. References:

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### **Appendix: List of Predictions Issued for the 2023 NW Pacific Typhoon Season**

<b>NW Pacific ACE Index and Numbers 2023</b>					
		ACE Index	Named Tropical Storms	Typhoons	Intense Typhoons
Average Number (1965-2022)		290	25.7	16.1	8.7
Average Number (1991-2020)		301	25.5	16.0	9.3
Average Number (2013-2022)		257	24.8	14.0	8.5
TSR Forecasts	8 August 2023	393	29	20	14
	7 July 2023	382	29	19	12
	5 May 2023	394	29	19	13